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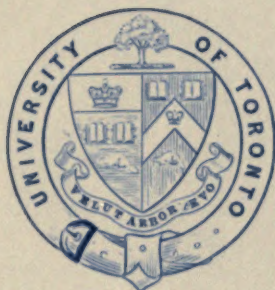


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# The EVE OF STAGNES



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~~The~~ EVE OF ST. AGNES





TO MRS. FANNY R. LUPTON

*I offer and dedicate that  
part of the work done upon  
this book which is deserving  
of the honor; in appreciation  
of a friendship.*

*Ralph Fletcher Seymour*

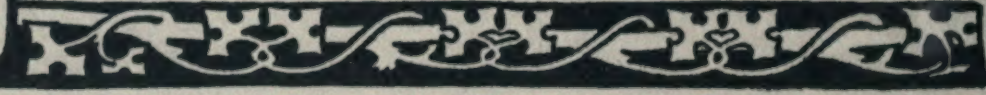


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A POEM BY





# REVE OF AGNES



At the  
FINE ARTS  
BUILDING  
MICHIGAN  
AVENUE  
CHICAGO  
ILL. USA

JOHN KEATS





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RALPH FLETCHER SEYMOUR

# THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

A POEM *by*  
JOHN KEATS  
WITH A PREFACE  
WRITTEN FOR IT BY  
EDMUND GOSSE

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*by*  
RALPH FLETCHER SEYMOUR

THE EVE OF  
T-A-G-N-E-S

PR  
4834  
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1900



UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
ANN ARBOR  
MICHIGAN

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES  
*A PREFACE BY*  
EDMUND GOSSE



HAT WE KNOW OF THE HISTORY OF KEAT'S ENCHANTING ROMANCE, "THE EVE OF ST. AGNES" COMES TO

us almost entirely from a sort of running journal which he sent to his brother & sister-in-law in America. From this source we

## The Eve of Saint Agnes

learn that he spent some time at Chichester after the death of Tom Keats in December 1818. He probably went down to the friends in Chichester before Christmas, for he was back at Wentworth Place, Hampstead, in the last week of January 1819. He writes to Mr. and Mrs. George Keats (Feb. 14, 1819) "Nothing worth speaking of happened at (Chichester.) I took down some of the thin paper & wrote on it a little poem, called "St Agnes Eve" which you will have as it is when I have finished the blank part of the rest for you."

In his next packet he sends the copied draft to America. These remarks Lord Houghton had doubtless overlooked when he said that "The



# A Preface

Eve of St. Agnes was begun on a visit to Hampshire," for Keats does not seem to have gone to Winchester, in the latter County, until August 1819. It would doubtless be safe, however, in accordance with a letter to Bailey, to say that the poem was finished at Winchester. In September, Keats writes:~

~"I am now engaged in revising 'St. Agnes Eve' and studying Italian."


By November he already takes the finished poem as a type of one class of his productions & writes to Taylor, "I wish to diffuse the colouring of 'St. Agnes Eve' throughout a poem in which character and sentiment would be the figures to such drapery."

## The Eve of Saint Agnes

**T**HE original MS. of the poem, on the "thin paper" which Keats took down with him to Chichester, is now in the splendid library of Mr. Godfrey Locker-Lampson at Rowfant. His father, Mr. Frederick Locker, bought it of a bookseller in London after the death of Severn. The first seven stanzas are unfortunately lost, but from this point onwards the MS. is perfect. There are many cancelled readings, some of them of great interest; these have been carefully preserved by Mr. Buxton Foreman in his noble edition of the writings of Keats (1883). In every instance, these corrections are for the better and emphasize the admirable judg~

# APreface

ment of the poet. Finally, the poem took its place in the famous volume entitled "Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes and other Poems," published by Taylor & Hessey in the summer of 1820, at the very moment of the fatal breakdown of Keats's health. Beyond these particulars there seems to be nothing preserved as to the circumstances or the time of the composition of 'St Agnes Eve'.

UT these indications are quite enough to enable us to place its entire history in the eventful year 1819, when the genius of Keats was at its height, and his physical health tottering to its catastrophe

## The Eve of Saint Agnes



THE Eve or Vigil of St Agnes is the 20<sup>th</sup> of January, and it is not impossible that Keats began his poem on that very night of the year 1819.

From his windows at Chichester he might see the flocks, silent in "winter fold"; his lonely walks might disturb the hare and send her "limping thro' the frozen grass." It is, at all events, to be pointed out that the poet was perfectly correct in connecting these images of midwinter with his festival, and that some of his commentators, who have stated that Halloween is the Eve of St. Agnes, are quite incorrect.

Hallowmass or Allhallowstide is, on the contrary, held late in the

# A Preface

autumn, and All Hallow's Eve is the 31st of October. Where Keats found his attribution to St. Agnes of the power of summoning up the image of true love, I am not aware. That power is universally allowed to the Saints in congress on the Vigil of their day of united mass, & that in many countries. But what authority had Keats for attributing it particularly to St. Agnes?

I do not know, but I conjecture that it was based upon a mistake in one of the books he was reading.



**N** a work on antiquities which was popular in Keats's day, Ben Jonson is quoted as describing the powers of St Agnes to reveal to the enamoured their

## The Eve of Saint Agnes

future husbands or wives. For any such passage I have searched the works of Ben Jonson in vain, but in his masque of "The Satyr" we may find these lines:-

*She can start our franklins' daughters  
In their sleep with shrieks & laughter,  
And on sweet St. Anna's night  
Feed them with a promised sight,  
Some of husbands, some of lovers,  
Which an empty dream discovers.*

In default of any reference to St. Agnes, we may take (I think) this allusion to a very different personage, St. Anne, as probably having started Keats on his adorable imaginative adventure. Whether Anne or Agnes, vigil or mass, the source really matters nothing to us: what is essential is the incomparable result.

# A Preface

The exact reference is evidently not to be traced by mortal man, for even the excellent Leigh Hunt, whose enthusiastic commentary of the poem in the 'London Journal' of 1835 was the earliest claim put forward for the highest honours for 'The Eve of Saint Agnes'—falls into a hopeless muddle about the date of the festival. There are some disturbing elements of common fact which wither up the delicacy of a vision by their frosty impact. It is doubtless best for us not to try to know too brutally what was only dimly divined even by Madeline and Porphyro.

## The Eve of Saint Agnes

**I**N the legend of St. Agnes, upon which we need not further dwell, there is only one slight feature which Keats might (or might not) have liked to use had he happened to be aware of it. That exquisite cup of cold green in a white shrine, the snowflake, is dedicated to this saint, whose innocency, ~ for her symbol is the new-born lamb, ~ and her purity, as exemplified in this coyest and coolest of all flowers, are needed to permit her with decorum to undertake this sensitive office of present





# A Preface

**L**ing in the hollow of the night the mirrored forms of lovers to those who long for them.

**C**ERTAIN points with regard to the form of 'The Eve of St. Agnes' are worthy of attention. The technical characteristics of it show to a remarkable degree the result of Keats's close study of the Elizabethan poets. The stanza he employs is the Spenserian, a metre of which he made no use elsewhere, except in the unworthy

## The Eve of Saint Agnes

fragment of 'The Cap and Bells.

In the poem before us, the stanza is conducted with a voluptuous richness not excelled by Thomson, Shelly or Tennyson, or even by Spenser himself. The poem is one of those short narratives in formal rhymed verse which it is convenient to call "romances."

In adopting for 'Isabella' & 'The Eve of St. Agnes' this form, it is not to be doubted that Keats was intentionally restoring to English poetry what had been a signal adornment of it in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

He was competing with those classical narratives in elaborate stanzaic form of which the 'Venus and Adonis' of Shakespeare was

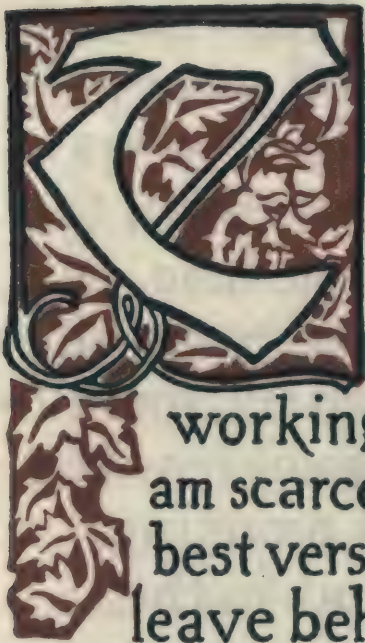
# A Preface

the most popular and the 'Scilla's Metamorphosis' of Lodge the earliest & typical specimen. The great difficulty in these tales, ~ which were so little removed except by the length from the lyric ~ was to preserve the spontaneity of the emotion and at the same time, the vitality of the narrative, ~ in other words to be rapturously imaginative, and yet (let us not fear the word) continuously amusing.

It must be said that in the skill with which he overcomes this difficulty Keats has no rival, except himself. To discover a romance in which vision & evolution are held so admirably in the balance throughout as in the 'Eve of St. Agnes', we must turn to

## The Eve of Saint Agnes

another work of Keats himself, ~ to 'Isabella, or the Pot of Basil'.



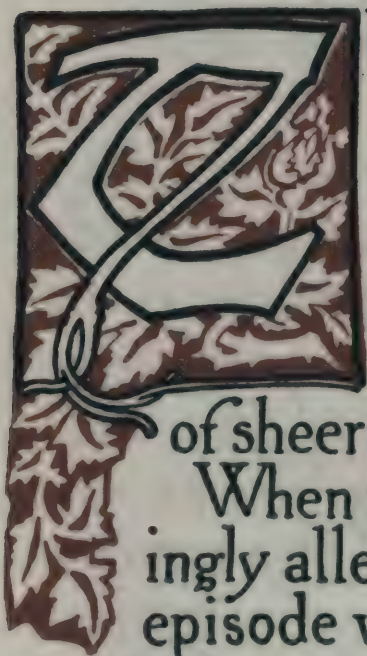
THE whole tissue and colouring of 'St. Agnes Eve' betray the hectic conditions in which the great and wonderful poet was working. He said himself, "I am scarcely content to write the best verses, from the fever they leave behind. I want to compose without this fever. I hope I shall one day," he added, but that day was never to dawn. There is perhaps no other masterpiece in English literature in which an equal physical ecstasy is apparent. Like his own Porphyro, the poet is

# A Preface

faint with a species of agony, as one who enjoys to the very edge of self-control a perfume or a flavor, a rapture of melody or a splendour of vision. A very little more and the delight would degenerate into delirium, but this step is not taken, the artist continues master of himself. In just an epithet here or an image there the danger is suggested, only to be majestically avoided. But further than this, in the transport of the nerves, sane art can hardly go. The rapture of this poem is proper to a lyric; it is almost without precedent that it should be supported, without a break, throughout so long a romance. It is, however, sup-

## The Eve of Saint Agnes

ported, and with such a breathless ravishness of all the senses, that in certain stanzas it almost passes, beyond ecstasy, into positive trance.



HIS poem of "The Eve of St. Agnes" is as fine an example as literature presents to us of the value and power of sheer imaginative vision.

When the Carlyles mockingly alleged that the central episode was nothing but "a dream in a store-room," Mrs. Browning indignantly replied that "no dream could ever be made a work of art," unless dreamed by some "*animosus infans*," like

# A Preface

Keats himself. To the sneer that the poem is all concerned with the senses, every one who knows what poetry is will reply, Yes, but the senses idealized. Here is poetry pure & simple, with no admixture of non-poetic or even sub-poetic elements. Here is the imagination in its quintessence. Nor, while English literature survives, is it likely that a poem will be written more perennially or deservedly attractive to the youthful, the ardent, and the unsophisticated.

Edmund Gosse

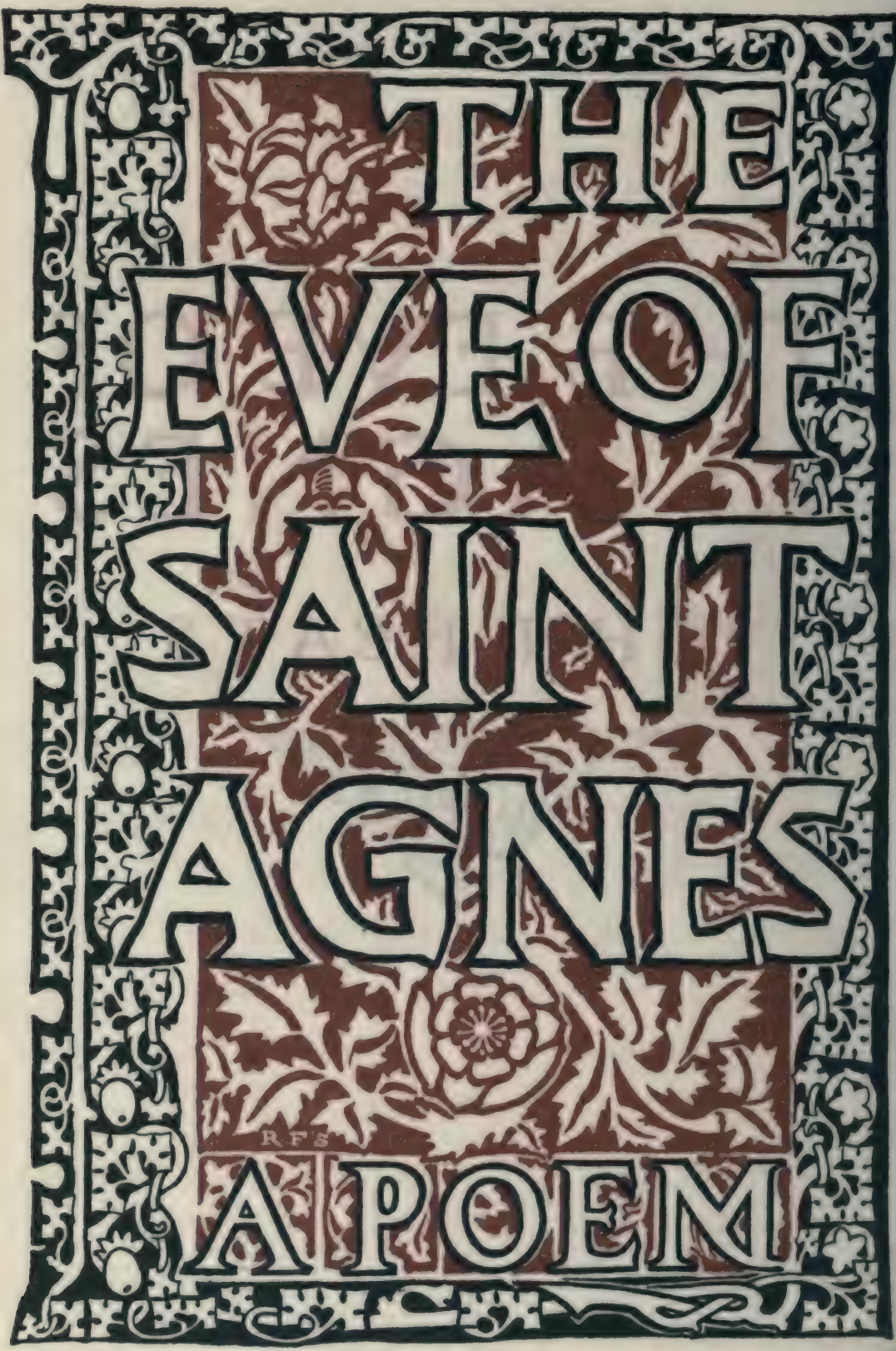




# THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

JOHN KEATS <sup>by</sup>





THE  
EVE OF  
SAINT  
AGNES  
A POEM

R.F.S.



Agnes' Eve... Ah, bitter  
chill it was!

The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold,  
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen  
And silent was the flock in wooly fold: <sup>grass</sup>  
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers while he tol'd  
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,  
Like pious incense from a censer old,  
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,  
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his  
prayer he saith.

11

**H**is prayer he saith, this  
patient holy man;  
Then takes his lamp, &  
riseth from his knees,  
And back returneth, meagre, bare-  
foot, man,  
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:  
The sculptur'd dead, on each side,  
seem to freeze,  
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails;  
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,  
He passeth by; & his weak spirit fails  
To think how they may ache in icy  
hoods and mails.

111

**N**orthward he turneth  
through a little door,  
And scarce three steps, ere Music's  
golden tongue  
Flatter'd to tears this aged man and  
poor;

# ST. AGNES

But no~ already had his death bell rung;  
The joys of all his life were said & sung:  
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' eve:  
Another way he went, and soon among  
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,  
And all night kept awake, for sinners sake  
to grieve.

||||

**W**hat ancient Beadsman  
heard the prelude soft;  
And so it chanc'd, (for  
many a door was wide,  
From hurry to and fro.) Soon, up aloft,  
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:  
The level chambers, ready with their pride,  
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests;  
The carved angels, ever eager-ey'd,  
Stard, where upon their heads the  
cornice rests  
With hair blown back, and wings put  
crosswise on their breasts.

v

**A**T length burst in the argent  
revelry,  
With plume, tiara, and  
all rich array,  
Numerous as shadows haunting faerily  
The brain, new stuff'd in youth, with  
triumphs gay  
Of old romance. These let us wish away,  
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,  
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,  
On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,  
As she had heard old dames full many  
times declare.

vi

**T**hey told her how, upon  
St. Agnes' Eve,  
Young virgins might  
have visions of delight,  
And soft adorings from their loves  
receive

# ST. ASNES

Upon the honey'd middle of the night,  
If ceremonies due they did aright;  
As, supperless to bed they must retire,  
And couch supine their beauties, lily  
white;  
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but  
require  
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all  
that they desire.





**F**ull of this whim was thought-  
ful Madeline;  
The music, yearning like a God in pain,  
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,  
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train  
Pass by.... she heeded not at all: in vain  
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,



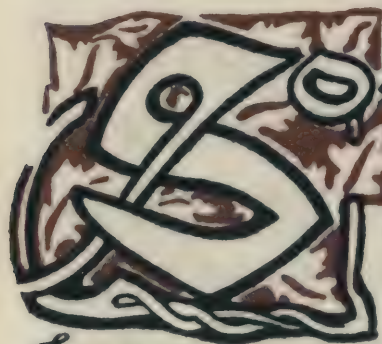
And back retir'd; not cool'd by high disdain,  
 But she saw not: her heart was otherwhere:  
 She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweet-  
 est of the year.

VIII.

**S**he danced along with vague,  
 regardless eyes,  
 Anxious her lips, her breath-  
 ing quick and short:  
 The hallow'd hour was near  
 at hand: she sighs  
 Amid the timbrels, and the  
 throng'd resort

Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;  
 Mid looks of love, defiance, hate and scorn,  
 Hoodwink'd with faery fancy: all amorn,  
 Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,  
 And all the bliss to be before tomor-  
 row morn.

IX



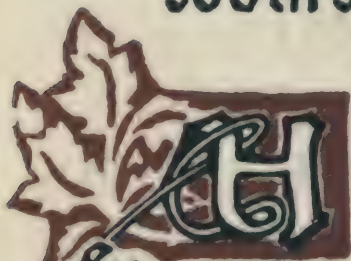
purposing each moment  
to retire,

She linger'd still. Mean-  
time, across the moors,

Had come young Porphyro, with heart <sup>on</sup> fire  
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,  
Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he,  
and implores

All saints to give him sight of Madeline,  
But for one moment in the tedious hours.  
That he might gaze & worship all unseen;  
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss ~ in  
sooth such things have been.

X

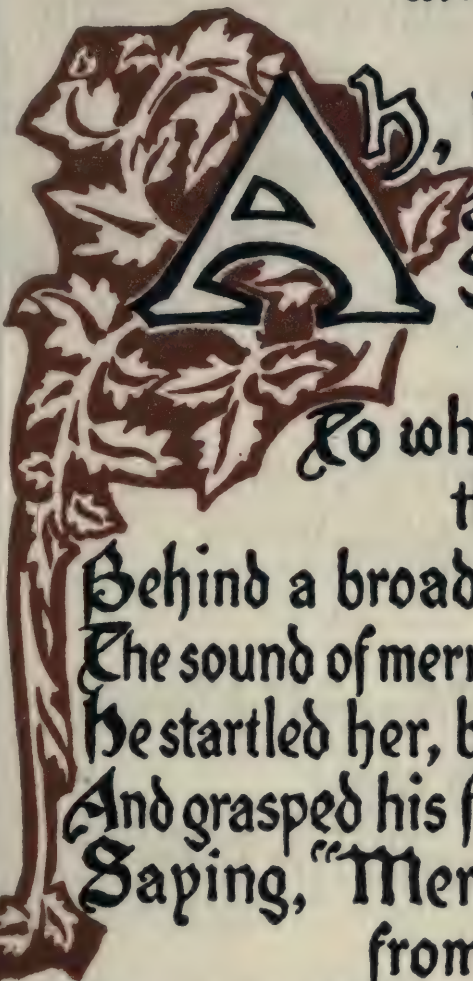


e ventures in: let no buzz'd  
whisper tell;

All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords  
Will storm his heart, Love's sev'rous citadel:  
For him those chambers held bar-  
barian hordes,

Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,  
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl  
 Against his lineage: not one breast affords  
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,  
 Save one old beldame, weak in body  
 and in soul.

## XI



**A**, happy chance! the  
 aged creature came,  
 Shuffling along with  
 ivory-headed wand,  
 To where he stood, hid from  
 the torch's flame,  
 Behind a broad hall pillar, far beyond  
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland:  
 He startled her, but soon she knew his face  
 And grasped his fingers in her palsied hand,  
 Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee  
 from this place;  
 They are all here tonight, the whole  
 blood-thirsty race!"

XII

**G**ET hence! get hence!  
there's dwarfish hilde brand;  
he had a fever late, and  
in the fit

he cursed thee and thine, both house & land:  
Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit  
More tame for his gray hairs.... Alas me! flit!  
Flit like a ghost away"... "Ah, Gossip dear,  
We're safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,  
And tell me how"... "Good Saints! not  
here, not here;  
Follow me, child, or else these stones  
will be thy bier."

XIII

**H**e follow'd through a lowly  
arched way,  
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty  
plume,  
And as she mutter'd, "Well-a.... well-  
a-day!"  
He found him in a little moonlight room,

# ST. AGNES

Pale lattic'd, chill, and silent as a tomb,  
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,  
"Oh tell me, Angela, by the holy loom  
Which none but secret sisterhood  
may see,

When they St. Agnes' wool are weav-  
ing piously."

XIV

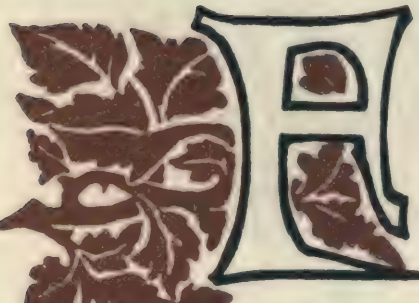
St. Agnes! Ah! it is St.  
Agnes' Eve...

Yet men will murder  
upon holy days:


Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,  
And be liege-lord of all the Elves and  
Fays,

To venture so: it fills me with amaze,  
To see thee, Porphyro! St. Agnes' Eve!  
God's help! my lady fair the conjurer plays  
This very night: good angels her deceive!  
But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle  
time to grieve."

XV

 eebly she laugheth in  
the languid moon,  
While Porphyro upon  
her face doth look,  
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone  
Who keepeth clos'd a wond'rous riddle-<sup>book</sup>  
As spectacled she sits in chimney-nook.  
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when  
she told  
his lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook  
Tears, at the thought of those enchant-  
ments cold,  
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

XVI

udden a thought came  
like a full-blown rose,  
Flushing his brow, and in his pained hear  
Made purple riot: then doth he propose  
A stratagem, that makes the beldame star  
"A cruel man and impious thou art:

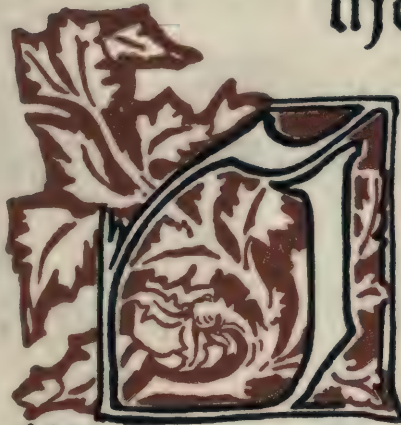
# ST. AGNES

Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep,  
and dream

Alone with her good angels, far apart  
From wicked men like thee. Go, go!—

I deem

Thou canst not surely be the same that  
thou didst seem."



XVII

will not harm her, by  
all saints I swear."

Quoth Porphyro: "O  
may I ne'er find grace

When my weak voice shall whisper its  
last prayer,

If one of her soft ringlets I displace,

Or look with ruffian passion in her face;

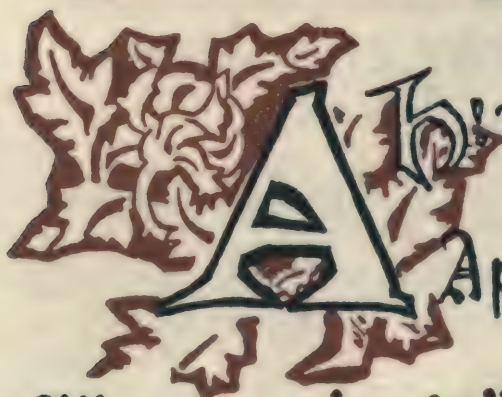
Good Angela, believe me by these tears;

Or I will, even in a moment's space,

Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears

And beard them, though they be more fang'd  
than wolves and bears."

XVIII



Why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?

A poor, weak, palsy-stricken churchyard thing,

Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll

Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,

Were never miss'd."..... Thus plaining, doth she bring

A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;

So woeful, and of such deep sorrowing,

That Angela gives promise she will do

Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

XIX



Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,

Even to Madeline's chamber, & there hide

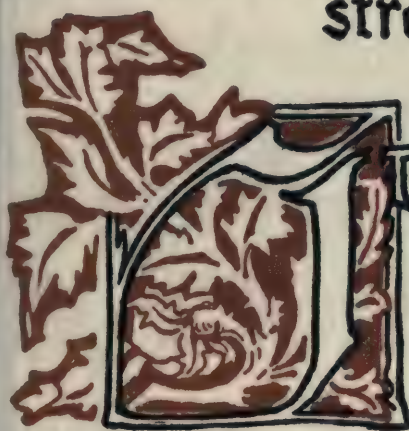
him in a closet, of such privacy

That he might see her beauty unespied,



And win, perhaps that night a peerless bride,  
 While legion'd faeries pac'd the coverlet,  
 And pale enchantment held her sleepy-ey'd.  
 Never on such a night have lovers met,  
 Since Merlin paid his Demon all the mon-  
 strous debt.

XX



"I shall be as thou wishest,"  
 said the Dame:  
 "All cates and dainties  
 shall be stored there  
 Quickly on this feast-night; by the  
 tambour-frame  
 her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,  
 For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare  
 On such a catering trust my dizzy head.  
 Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel  
 in prayer  
 The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,  
 Or may I never leave my grave among  
 the dead."

XXI



So saying, she hobbled off  
with busy fear.

The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;

The dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear  
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast  
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,  
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain  
The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd,  
and chaste;

Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain.  
His poor guide hurried back with agues  
in her brain.

XXII



Her falt'ring hand upon  
the balustrade,

Old Angela was feeling for the stair,  
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid:  
Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware:  
With silver taper's light, and pious care,

She turn'd, and down the aged gossiped  
 To a safe level matting. Now prepare,  
 Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;  
 He comes, she comes again, like ring-  
 dove fray'd and fled.

## XXIII

**O**ut went the taper as she  
 hurried in;  
 Its little smoke, in pallid  
 moonshine died:

She clos'd the door, she panted, all akin  
 To spirits of the air, and visions wide:  
 No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!  
 But to her heart, her heart was voluble,  
 Paining with eloquence her balmy side:  
 As though a tongueless nightingale  
 should swell  
 Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled,  
 in her dell.



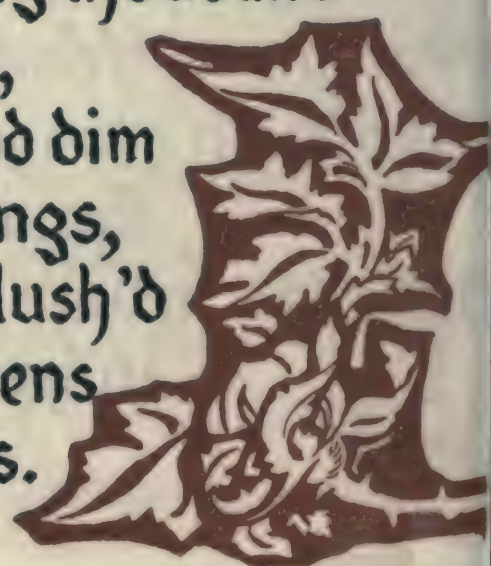
XXIV

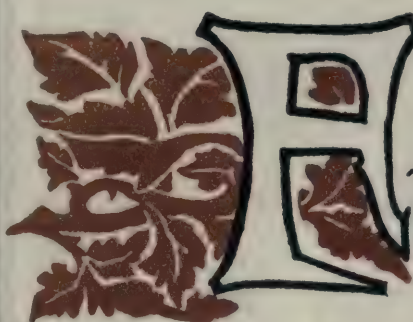
casement high and  
triple-arch'd there was,  
All garlanded with  
carven imag'ries

Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches  
of knot-grass,  
And diamonded with panes of quaint  
device,

Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,  
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings,  
And in the midst, 'mong thousand  
heraldries,

And twilight saints, and dim  
emblazonings,  
Ashielded scutcheon blush'd  
with blood of queens  
and kings.




 ull on this casement  
 shown the wintry moon,  
 And threw warm gules  
 on Madeline's fair breast,  
 As down she knelt for heaven's grace  
 and boon;  
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together  
 prest,  
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst,  
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint:  
 She seem'd a splendid angel, newly  
 drest,  
 Save wings, for heaven:— Porphyro  
 grew faint:  
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from  
 mortal taint.

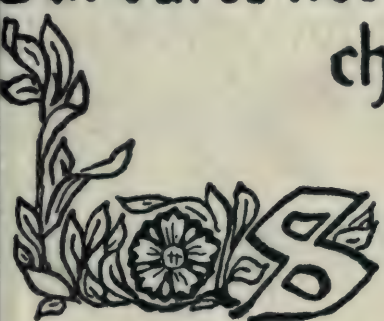




his heart revives: her  
    vepers done,  
Of all its wreathed  
pearls her hair she free:  
Unclasps her warmed  
jewels one by one;

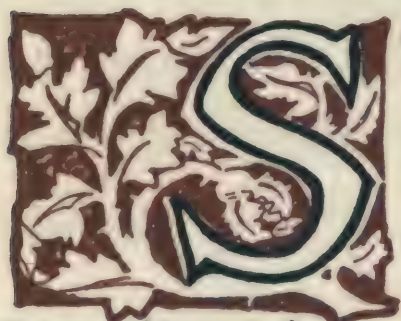
Loosens her fragrant boddice; by degrees  
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:  
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,  
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,  
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,  
But dares not look behind, or all the  
charm is fled.

XXVII



Soon, trembling in her soft  
and chilly nest,  
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,  
Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep oppres'd  
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued  
away;  
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day:  
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain;  
Clasp'd like a missal where swart  
Pagnims pray;  
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,  
As though a rose should shut, and be a  
bud again.

XXVIII



tolen to this paradise,  
and so entranced,  
Porphyro gaz'd upon her  
empty dress,

And listen'd to her breathing, if it chance  
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;  
Which when he heard, that minute  
did he bless,

And breath'd himself: then from the  
closet crept,

Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,  
And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,  
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where,  
lo!— how fast she slept.

XXIX



hen by the bedside, where  
the faded moon

Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set  
A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon  
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:—



O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!  
 The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,  
 The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,  
 Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:  
 The hall door shuts again, and all the  
 noise is gone.

XXX

**A**nd still she slept an azure-  
 lidded sleep,  
 In blanched linen, smooth,  
 and lavender'd,  
 While he from forth the closet brought  
 a heap  
 Of candied apple, quince, and plum,  
 and gourd;  
 With jellies soother than the creamy curd,  
 And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon;  
 Manna and dates, in argosy transfer'd  
 From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,  
 From silken Samarcand to cedar'd  
 Lebanon.

XXXI



These delicacies he heap'd  
with glowing hand  
On golden dishes and in  
baskets bright

Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they stand  
In the retired quiet of the night,  
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—

“And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!  
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:  
Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,  
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul  
doth ache.”

XXXII



Thus whispering, his warm,  
unnerved arm  
Sank in her pillow. Shaded  
was her dream  
By the dusk curtains:—'twas a  
midnight charm  
Impossible to melt as iced stream:

The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam  
 Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:  
 It seem'd he never, never could redeem  
 From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;  
 So mus'd awhile, entoil'd in woofed  
 phantasies.

XXXIII



wakening up, he took  
 her hollow lute,~  
 Tumultuous,~ and, in chords  
 that tenderest be,

He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,  
 In Provence call'd, "La Belle dame sans mercy"  
 Close to her ear touching the melody;~  
 Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a  
 soft moan:

He ceas'd~ she panted quick~ and  
 suddenly

Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:  
 Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth~  
 sculptured stone.

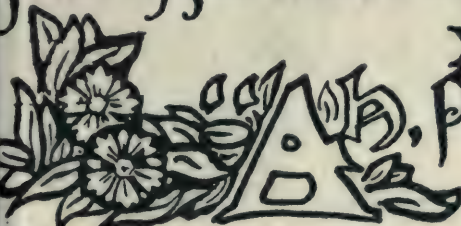


**L****E****D****R**

Eyes were open, but  
she still beheld,  
Now wide awake, the  
vision of her sleep:  
There was a painful  
change, that night  
expell'd

The blisses of her dream so pure and deep  
 At which fair Madeline began to weep,  
 And moan forth witless words with  
 many a sigh;

While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;  
 Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye  
 Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dream-

 <sup>XXXV</sup> Porphyro!" said she, "but <sup>ingly</sup>  
 even now

Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,  
 Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;  
 And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:  
 How chang'd thou art! how pallid, chill,  
 and drear!

Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,  
 Those looks immortal, those complain-  
 ings dear!

Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,  
 For if thou diest, my Love, I know not  
 where to go.

XXXVI



Beyond a mortal man  
impassion'd far  
At these voluptuous  
accents, he arose,

Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star  
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep  
repose;

Into her dream he melted, as the rose  
Blendeth its odour with the violet, ~  
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-  
wind blows

Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp  
sleet

Against the window-panes; St. Agnes'  
moon hath set.

XXXVII



Ris dark: quick pattereth  
the flaw-blown sleet:

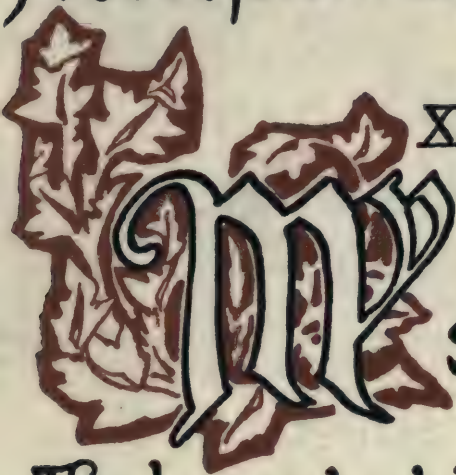
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"

"'Tis dark: the iced gusts still rave and beat

"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!

Porphyro will leave me here to fade & pine.—  
 Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?  
 I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,  
 Though thou forsakest a deceived thing;—  
 A dove folorn and lost with sick unpruned  
 wing.”

XXXVIII



Madeline! sweet dreamer!  
 lovely bride!

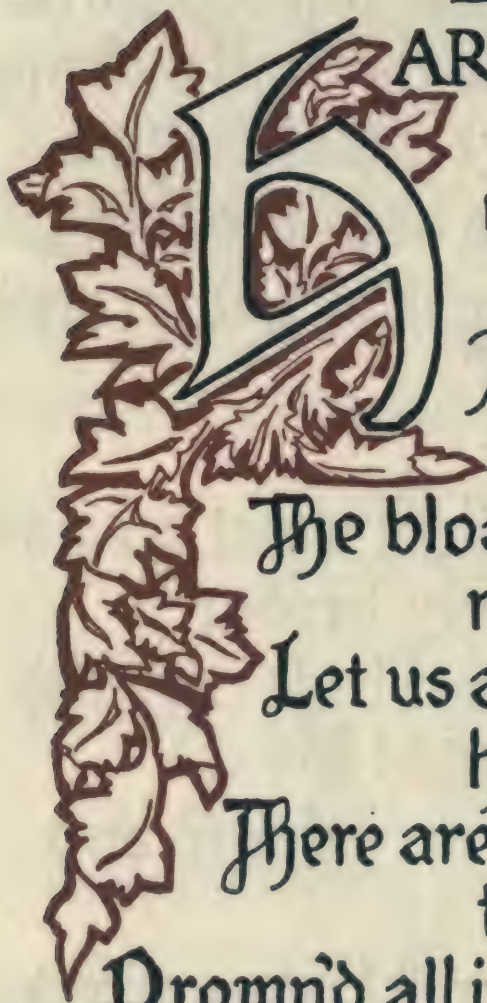
Say, may I be for aye thy  
 vassal blest?

Thy beauty's shield, heart-shap'd and  
 vermeil dy'd?

Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest  
 After so many hours of toil and quest,  
 A famish'd pilgrim, ~sav'd by miracle.

Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest  
 Saving of thy sweet self; if thou  
 think'st well

So trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.



ARK! 'tis an elfin storm  
from faery land,

Of haggard seeming,  
but a boon indeed:

Arise~arise! the morn-  
ing is at hand;~

The bloated wassaillers will  
never heed:~

Let us away, my love, with  
happy speed;


There are no ears to hear, or eyes  
to see,~

Drown'd all in Rhenish and the  
sleepy mead.

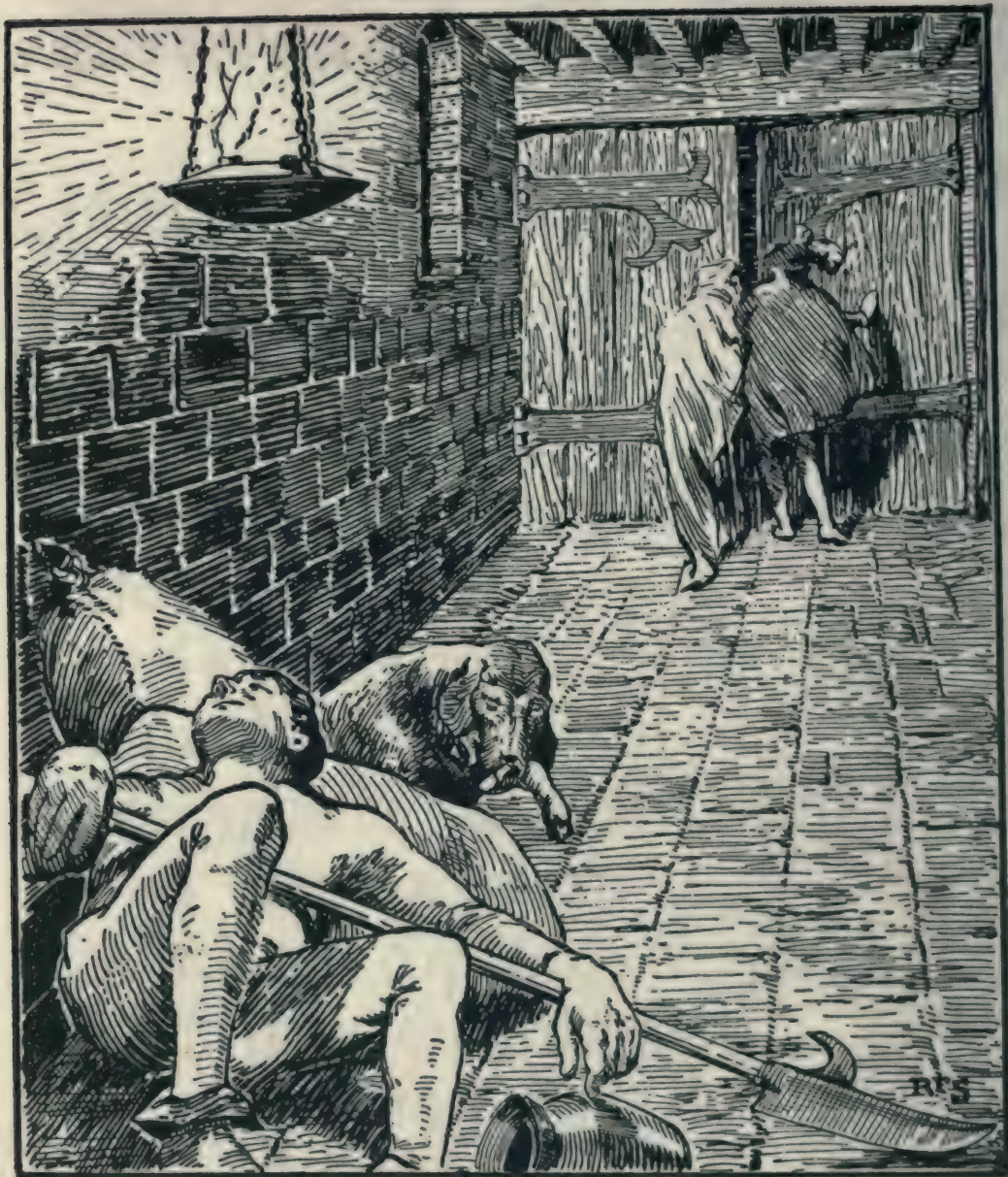
Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,  
For o'er the southern moors I have a  
home for thee".



XL



HE hurried at his words,  
beset with fears,  
For there were sleeping  
dragons all around,  
At glaring watch, per-  
haps, with ready spears~  
Down the wide stairs a dark-  
ling way they found~  
In all the house was heard no  
human sound.  
A chain-droop'd lamp was  
flickering by each door;  
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk,  
and hound,  
Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;  
And the long carpets rose along the  
gusty floor.



**T**HE

glide, like phantoms,  
into the wide hall;  
Like phantoms, to the  
iron porch, they glide;  
Where lay the porter,  
in uneasy sprawl,

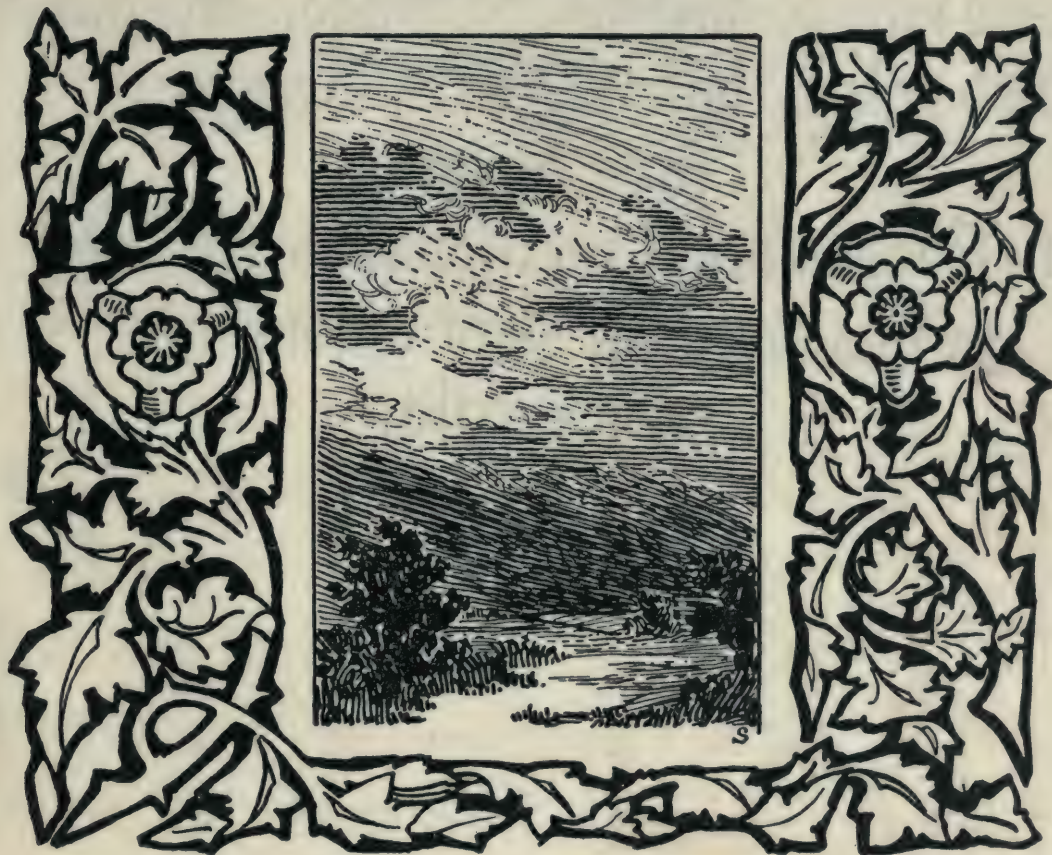
With a huge empty flaggon by his  
side:

The wakeful bloodhound rose, and  
shook his hide,

But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:  
By one, and one, the bolts full easy  
slide:—

The chains lie silent on the footworn  
stones;—

The key turns, and the door upon its  
hinges groans.



XLII



nd they are gone: aye,  
ages long ago  
These lovers fled away  
into the storm.

That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,  
And all his warrior-guests with shade  
and form

Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,  
Were long be-nightmar'd. Angela the old  
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre  
face deform,

The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,  
For aye unsought for slept among his  
ashes cold.

“HERE ENDETH THE YOUNG AND  
DIVINE POET, BUT NOT THE DELIGHT  
AND GRATITUDE OF HIS READERS,  
FOR, AS HE SINGS ELSE~  
WHERE;”

“A thing of beauty is a joy forever.”















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Keats, John

The eve of St. Agnes

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